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AUTHOR	Young, Lin; McCready, Rochelle; Jackson, Gregory
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ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to invite career service professional to incorporate a Multiple Intelligences framework in their practice to better assist their clients. The authors suggest that this framework is worthwhile to apply for the following reasons: MI can be used as a diagnostic and assessment tool to assist counselors in their case conceptualization and intervention process; MI can serve as an additional assessment tool to help clients gain more self-knowledge, expand their career exploration and options, and assist them in their career decision-making; and MI is an applicable and valuable framework to use with an increasingly multicultural population. This article has two main purposes--to provide a brief introduction of MI theory and to offer strategies to apply this theory in the intake and decision making process. (GCP)

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Multiple Intelligences: Intake Strategies and Career Decision Making

by
Lin Young
Rochelle McCready
Gregory Jackson

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Chapter Fourteen

Multiple Intelligences: Intake Strategies and Career Decision Making

Lin Young, Rochelle McCready, & Gregory Jackson

Introduction

Making an effective career decision is a complex task. It involves a multitude of factors such as a person's knowledge of the self, knowledge of the continual changing world of work, and the application and integration of this knowledge to the consideration of career choices. As career counselors, our task of helping clients through this process has mirrored that complexity. Through the traditional counseling process, we help clients explore their skills, interests, values, personality attributes, previous work experiences, and preferences for work setting to find congruent career alternatives. However, an important component that many counselors have not examined is the concept of Multiple Intelligences (MI). Excluding MI underserves the client's career counseling needs and may overlook nascent and developing skill areas that warrant further exploration and consideration. Including MI broadens the scope of potential career choices, especially in an increasingly multicultural environment.

Goal & Purposes

The goal of this paper is to invite career service professionals to incorporate an MI framework in their practice to better assist their clients. This framework is worthwhile to apply for the following reasons:

(1) MI can be used as a diagnostic and assessment tool to assist counselors in their case conceptualization and intervention process;

(2) MI can serve as an additional assessment tool to help clients gain more self-knowledge, expand their career exploration and options, and assist them in their career decision-making; and

(3) MI is an applicable and valuable framework to use with an increasingly multicultural population.

The specific population that this article is intended for is career counselors and other professionals who are exposed to helping clients with career-related issues. This article has two main purposes – to provide a brief introduction of MI theory and to offer strategies to apply this theory in the intake and decision-making process.

From this article, readers are provided with the following specific learning objectives:

(1) Knowledge of MI theory and its constructs (7 intelligences);
(2) Ability to apply this knowledge to identify their clients MI profiles;
(3) Acquisition of strategies to use it in the intake process;
(4) Ability to assist clients in self-discovery inspired by MI in the decision making process;
(5) Ability to use a client's MI profile to customize specific interventions to meet the client's needs.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

In a nutshell, Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is an innovative and pluralistic approach to viewing intelligence. The theory challenges the limited traditional Western view of looking at intelligence only in terms of logical and linguistic competencies. Additionally, according to Gardner the model "challenges the widespread belief that intelligence consists of a single faculty...that a person is either smart or stupid" (p.34). Instead, he proposes a broader and more egalitarian view of the intellect. Gardner defines intelligence as "a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 33-34). Through extensive research in the fields of neuroanatomy, biological sciences, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, psychometrics, and anthropology, Gardner proposed the existence of seven types of intelligences and established eight criteria as sources of evidence. For those who seek a deeper understanding of MI Theory we recommend Gardner's 1999 text, *Reframe the Mind: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century.*

Descriptions of the Seven Multiple Intelligences

A concept conceived by Howard Gardner (Harvard University), Multiple Intelligences are seven different ways individuals demonstrate intellectual ability.

What are the types of Multiple Intelligence?

Visual/Spatial Intelligence: The ability to perceive the visual. These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence: The ability to use words and language. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: The ability to use reason, logic and numbers. These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. They are always curious about the world around them, asking lots of questions and enjoying experimentation.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence: The ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination (e.g., ball play, balancing beams, dancing, tumbling). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence: The ability to produce and appreciate music. These musically-inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music, either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g., crickets, bells, dripping taps, floor creaks).

Interpersonal Intelligence: The ability to relate to and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense other's feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. They generally try to maintain harmony in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g., speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g., eye contact, body language) to open and maintain communication with others.

Intrapersonal Intelligence: The ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Application of the MI Theory in the Intake Process

The intake interview is a crucial point for maximizing the success of the counseling process. According to Liptak (2001), a major goal of the intake interview is to gather comprehensive data about the client in order to formulate a diagnosis and develop an effective treatment plan. MI can serve as an additional valuable tool to assist counselors in achieving the goal of this process.

For example, MI can be used as a diagnostic and assessment tool in conceptualizing clients' presenting problems and in determining their needs. By assessing a client's MI strengths and weaknesses, the counselor can apply this knowledge to examine if there is a relationship between the client's MI profile and the presenting problem. For instance, in the case of a *work performance problem*, MI can be used to explore incongruencies and/or discrepancies between the job requirements and the client's abilities. If skills are deficient, MI can help to determine whether enhancement of those skills is warranted.

In the case of a *work adjustment problem*, MI would be helpful in discerning its origins. If the source stems from an environmental factor such as interpersonal conflicts due to the client's low level of interpersonal intelligence, counselors can formulate an intervention plan that would include the enhancement of the client's abilities to read other people's feelings, moods, and intentions as well as to effectively communicate and relate to others.

Additionally, in the case of a *decisional problem* such as an undecided client who lacks self-knowledge and/or knowledge of the world of work, MI can be used to increase self-understanding, to promote the concept of multidimensional work requirements, to generate new career options, and to assist in career decision-making.

Furthermore, MI is useful for clients with an *implementation problem*–lack of motivation and persistence or fear of rejection/failure. As a motivational stimulus, counselors might utilize a client's MI strengths in designing an implementation activity. For example, in the occupational information gathering phase, counselors might suggest to clients with a high level of Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence to read more about an occupation or to conduct an information interview. For clients with a strong Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence, carrying out a job shadowing activity might be recommended. During a job search process, counselors can tap into their client's Intrapersonal Intelligence to help build personal resiliency and persistence.

Moreover, MI is especially helpful for clients who present with a *personal problem*–low self-esteem (Kerba, 1999). Counselors can use MI to reframe the client's self-concept and improve his/her self-esteem and

self-efficacy expectation.

Besides serving as a diagnostic and assessment tool for hypothesis testing and case conceptualization as demonstrated above through several specific examples, the use of MI can provide directions for establishing goals and planning intervention strategies. Understanding the client's needs and his/her MI profile (particularly the strengths), the counselor can customize appropriate goals and intervention techniques to meet those needs. Lastly, MI can be applied as a medium to stimulate further dialogue about career-related issues, to encourage self-reflection and rehearsal of career aspirations, and to promote the client's engagement in the counseling process.

Applications of MI in the Decision-Making Process

The career decision-making process focuses on identifying, prioritizing, and selecting occupational alternatives and is a process that will occur continuously throughout one's life. By using MI as a part of this process counselors can help clients gain a deeper understanding of their occupational preferences and a greater appreciation of their strengths. Clients are likely to become more engaged in career exploration as they find occupations that match their intelligence strengths. When clients become aware of their strengths, occupational possibilities can be plentiful and a decision of "no choice" may seem positive whereas before it may have appeared directionless.

According to his theory, Gardner regards intelligence as a set of abilities, talents, and skills in the seven areas mentioned earlier. We all possess these intelligences in varying degrees and often apply them depending on preferences, activities, and environment. Thus, MI profiling can be useful in the career decision making process as it may include information important to the client that may further assist in making an informed and personally satisfying career decision.

"*Where the needs of the world and your talents cross, there lies your vocation.*" This is what the Greek philosopher Aristotle told his students circa 300 B.C.E. Today a counselor can help a client using MI by letting his/her intelligence assist in his/her career choice. According to Kerka (1999), it is important that the client:

- Becomes aware of his/her MI strengths and challenges to add to his/her **self-knowledge**
- **Expand occupational possibilities** instead of focusing on the right job fit
- Recognize that he/she is intelligent and can identify jobs that match his/her strengths and **enhance their self-esteem**

By helping clients understand the many ways they are intelligent,

counselors can help clients make smart occupational choices. Following is a short list of occupations categorized by primary intelligence:

- **Linguistic Intelligence:** librarian, curator, speech pathologist, writer, radio or TV announcer, journalist, lawyer
- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence:** auditor, accountant, mathematician, scientist, statistician, computer analyst, technician
- **Spatial Intelligence:** engineer, surveyor, architect, urban planner, graphic artist, interior decorator, photographer, pilot
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence:** physical therapist, dancer, actor, mechanic, carpenter, forest ranger, jeweler
- **Musical Intelligence:** musician, piano tuner, music therapist, choral director, conductor
- **Interpersonal Intelligence:** administrator, manager, personnel worker, psychologist, nurse, public relations person, social director, teacher
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** psychologist, therapist, counselor, theologian, program planner entrepreneur
- **Naturalist Intelligence:** botanist, astronomer,wildlife management, meteorologist, chef, geologist, landscape architect

Nearly all jobs consist of a variety of responsibilities touching on several intelligences and it is important to point out to clients that different intelligences are required for each job – and it is important to develop and nurture all of our intelligences. Most clients will possess the abilities of all seven intelligences but he/she will have three or four that are stronger than the rest.

Summary and Conclusions

Helping clients make effective career decisions is a complex job that involves acquiring, analyzing and synthesizing a myriad of factors. This paper attempts to inform and encourage career service professionals to integrate the MI framework in three major areas: 1) as a powerful diagnostic, assessment, and intervention tool for counselors; 2) as a valuable self-assessment and career exploration tool for clients; and 3) as an important resource to apply with our growing diverse population. In support of these three areas, the article provided specific relevant strategies that counselors can use during the intake and decision-making process to better serve our clients.

Because MI theory celebrates a diversity of intelligences that are emergent within humankind, including this theory helps expand the general paradigm of career counseling to better serve our clients, particularly those with multicultural backgrounds.

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